

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2017: *Salvation by Faith Alone: The Book of Romans*
Lesson 8 “Who Is the Man of Romans 7?”

Read for this week’s study

Romans 7.

Memory Text

“Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Romans 19 7:6).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Dead to the Law
- III. Sin and the Law
- IV. The Law is Holy
- V. The Man of Romans 7
- VI. Saved From Death
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Romans 7:1-6. What illustration does Paul use here in order to show his readers their relationship to the law, and what point is he making with that illustration? How does Paul apply the law of marriage to the system of Judaism (7:4-5)? What evidence is there in the Old Testament that the sanctuary system was temporary (an emergency measure)? (Sunday’s lesson)
2. Read Romans 7:7. Is it actually the purpose of the law to provoke sin? What does Paul mean here? Read verses 8-11. What is the relationship between the law and sin in these verses? (Monday’s lesson)
3. Read Romans 7:12. How should we understand this verse in the light of the previous verses? Is the law the tool of death? Who does Paul blame for his condition of “death” and what does he exonerate? Why is this distinction important (7:13)? Read Romans 7:14-15. Why was sin so successful in showing up Paul to be a terrible sinner? (Tuesday’s lesson)

4. Read Romans 7:16-17. Describe the struggle that Paul is presenting here. Is there a difference between agreeing with the law and delighting in it? What points does Paul repeat for emphasis in verse 18-20? (Wednesday's lesson)
5. Read Romans 7:21-23. Does the struggle Paul is describing here sound like that of a practicing Christian or is it the struggle that initially leads a person to Christ? Is it the struggle of Paul as an earliteen or as a mature Christian? (Thursday's lesson)
6. How can any struggling person be rescued from the kind of situation Paul described in Romans 7 (see Romans 7:24-25)? (Thursday's lesson)
7. Who is the wretched man of Romans 7:24? Martin Luther believed that he represents the believer who is at the same time 100% righteous and 100% sinner. In his view it is Christians who serve the law of God and the law of sin at the same time. He argues that no unconverted person would possibly serve the law of God, therefore the man of Romans 7 must be a godly one. What do you think? Did Graham Maxwell agree with Luther's view of the man in Romans 7? (Friday's lesson)
8. Romans, chapter 6, draws up a number of contrasts. There is a contrast between those who are under law and those who are under grace. There is a contrast between slavery and freedom. There is a contrast between life and death. There is a contrast between sin and righteousness. There is a contrast between law and the Spirit. All of these contrasts in chapter 6 are between the believer and the one outside of Christ. What implications do these contrasts in Romans 6 have for the identity of the man in Romans 7? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the book of Romans is available at <http://pkp.cc/MMROMANS66>

He says, "I delight in that, in the law of God, in my inmost self. But I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind." Now this is not Ten Commandments here, these are principals and forces at work, "making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."

He hasn't come up with a new picture here. Isn't this the new man and the old man struggling? The convictions of the new man who gladly buried his old man in baptism, and said, "I'd like now to live a better life. I'd like to live as Christ lived." But almost immediately one succumbs to temptation and disgrace. This happens so often in life that finally one might cry as Paul did, "Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this" how does your translation read this last part? Mine says "body of death." I like "doomed body". He answers, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin."

Now, when is this struggle? Is it before a man is converted? And when he's converted and justified, he from then on has peace not only with God, but with himself. Or is this the struggle that continues after one is converted. The struggle, surely, every Christian has experienced. Or is it perhaps, the struggle of a person in the experience of conversion, an experience that might be repeated every time one comes face to face with new truth, and you have to make up your mind again. Am I willing to do it or not? What have you decided? You know how this has been debated through the years. In the *Commentary* there are a couple of pages in which I tried to express the different interpretations that have been placed, and that I believe could be placed on this passage. What's your opinion?

COMMENT: I've kind of come to the conclusion for myself that Paul certainly was post-conversion at this point. And, to me he was also in a way post-conversion before Damascus because he really wanted to serve God. What changed for him at Damascus and in the 14 years or whatever that he was in Arabia, was his conception of God and what Christ was trying to say with his life and death. And to me, Paul here is writing as a post-conversion man, writing to those of his fellow countrymen who also wanted very much to serve God, but they hadn't discovered the way to do it yet, and they were still trying to do it the old legalistic way. And he was trying to tell them, "I've been there, I know what you're going through, and believe me, Christ is the answer. As long as you keep trying to make yourself better you're not going to make it. You're going to continue to have this struggle; you're going to end up just like I was. I went out killing people, or wanting to kill them because they wouldn't obey." And so to me, these are people post-conversion he's talking about. Paul is identifying with a group of people that are going through his previous experience.

Alright, there's an explanation of a view that this is post or after conversion.

COMMENT: My own feeling on this matter is that it happens pre, post, during, continually throughout life.

So you believe this could refer to the struggle whenever it occurs. It does imply the person has come face to face with the standard in the law. This struggle begins then, it continues for the rest of life, but the answer is always the same, absolutely.

Would you see the struggle, then, at any time in life? Not before conversion or after conversion but this is a struggle known to any Christian who's concerned to do what is right.

Now, in the light of this, in the audience, before whom this is being presented, read for the first time, wouldn't there be some members in the audience approaching conversion, they hadn't made up their minds? There were some, perhaps, at that very critical moment, passing through the experience of decision. There were some who'd been in the Way for some time. Don't you

think everyone in the audience learned something from this? That no matter when you're engaged in this struggle with sin and to do what is right, there's only one way to succeed. Wouldn't there be a message for everybody in the audience? Or is this only for people before conversion? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 7, recorded November, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Now you can see the connection immediately with 6:14, he's still on that subject, that in our desire to overcome sin, of any kind, we're not under law, we're under grace. If we dealt with a legalistic God we'd have no chance. The wages of sin is death he said at the end of chapter 6. If we were under law, we'd be reaping the consequence and the penalty of having violated that law. But we're not under law, we're under grace. To be under law is very discouraging. To be under grace is to be most encouraged. In fact, Paul says, that so long as we attempt to overcome by means of law, this thing we call legalism, we're doomed, it just doesn't work. We'll go on sinning and we'll reap the consequence in death. For the law has no provision for helping us overcome sin, it has no method of healing, or saving. "In fact," Paul says in verse 5, "rather than helping us obey; the law actually irritates me and provokes me. The law even arouses sin." How that works we perhaps should save for verse seven where he says, "I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said 'you shall not covet.'"

And the next verse he speaks of how the law has provoked him to sin. "Now," he says though, "realizing I'm not under law in my relationship with God, but under grace, I even find that the law doesn't provoke me anymore. Having a new relationship with God, I have a new understanding of his law." This is the interesting thing that the gospel does for one, the good news about our gracious God. That if only we knew the truth, the truth would set us free, does not turn us away from the law, but the message of grace, and healing, and freedom, is actually what enables us to do what we've wanted all along and actually keep that law. And this brings up the age-old question of the relationship between the law and the gospel, the issue at the Minneapolis General Conference. The big shift now, in Paul's life, seems to be that he's turned from trying to relate to and obey an impersonal code, which he never found he could successfully do, he's now not preoccupied with that code. In fact, he won't even read the Bible anymore; it's just a code book of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned.

Now having come to know the good news about our gracious God, a healing, forgiving, gracious God, a message of which Paul was very proud, he finds that under grace he's actually succeeding in accomplishing what he wanted so much to do before as a legalist. So to help us understand this, he talks about dying to the law. How do you think we ought to understand this? Remember this is being read out loud to audience, the Holy Spirit of truth, the gracious

teacher, helping Paul say things in the clearest possible way. He didn't want to mystify the congregation in Rome; he wanted to clarify things for them.

So thinking of all the illustrations he could use, he chose this one about the law of marriage. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 7, recorded November, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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Then Paul goes on, "What then shall we say? That the law in sin? Because when I just deal with the law impersonally, it seems to even provoke and arouse me, by no means. Yet if it had not been for the law I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'" It's interesting that Paul picks out the tenth commandment, which might seem to be the most general one. In the Greek it simply prohibits any evil desire. But it was the tenth one that provoked him the most because the tenth doesn't prohibit any particular act that could be avoided. The Tenth Commandment prohibits even evil desire, and thus puts its finger on the very essence of sin.

You remember 1 John 3:4; you see, sin is not so much *the* transgression of *the* law. The Greek word is sin is lawlessness, rebelliousness, it is an attitude. And the commandment that touches on that innermost attitude is the tenth, "Thou shalt not have evil desire." But Jesus applied the tenth, didn't he, to some of the others. He said, "Maybe you never murder, but if you hate your brother you're a murderer, if you want to kill him." A man may have never seemed to commit adultery, but he says, "If you desire to, if you lust, you have broken that commandment." For Jesus very well understood the tenth. The tenth is the most personal of all of them, and the one that provoked Paul the most. For he'd been a very exemplary Pharisee, and he'd gone for days without violating the Commandments, it would appear. But then he read that tenth again, that he couldn't even desire to sin. And he says, "That provoked me. That irritated me." Later on he says, "I delight in that tenth one" because you know what that tenth one means? That in the New Earth, to which no one will be admitted whose life cannot be described by the Ten Commandments, or Jesus' summary that love is the fulfilling of the law. We'll not only live in a society where people don't murder and don't steal, they won't even want to, they won't even desire to. For the tenth commandment will also describe the way they think and feel and treat other people. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 7, recorded November, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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Further Study with Ellen White

When a man turns away from human imperfections, and beholds Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in his character. He fixes his eye upon Christ as on a mirror which reflects the glory of God, and by beholding, he becomes “changed into the same image, from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9). {TDG 46.3}

God has withheld nothing from man that could promote his happiness or secure to him eternal riches. He has clothed the earth with beauty, and furnished it with everything necessary for the comfort of man during his temporal life.—*Signs of the Times*, June 2, 1887. {TDG 162.6}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

God has given us His holy precepts, because He loves mankind. To shield us from the results of transgression, He reveals the principles of righteousness. The law is an expression of the thought of God; when received in Christ, it becomes our thought. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin. God desires us to be happy, and He gave us the precepts of the law that in obeying them we might have joy. When at Jesus’ birth the angels sang,—

“Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14),

they were declaring the principles of the law which He had come to magnify and make honorable. {DA 308.1}

Rightdoing will bring peace and holy joy. {ML 163.8}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God’s law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man’s well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification. {AG 20.6}

Satan’s rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan’s rule, its effects

upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty. {FLB 70.4}

But God is ever seeking to impress our hearts by His Holy Spirit, that we shall be convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. We may place our will on the side of God's will, and in His strength and grace resist the temptations of the enemy. As we yield to the influence of the Spirit of God, our conscience becomes tender and sensitive, and sin that we have passed by with little thought, becomes exceeding sinful. {OHC 153.4}

God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable. He always pursues a straightforward course. His law is truth—immutable, eternal truth. His precepts are consistent with His attributes. But Satan makes them appear in a false light. By perverting them, he seeks to give human beings an unfavorable impression of the Lawgiver. Throughout his rebellion he has sought to represent God as an unjust, tyrannical being. . . . {HP 146.3}

As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus (RH April 24, 1900). {7BC 943.2}

In His Word God reveals what He can do for human beings. He molds and fashions after the divine similitude the characters of those who will wear His yoke. Through His grace they are made partakers of the divine nature, and are thus enabled to overcome the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is God who gives us power to overcome. Those who hear His voice and obey His commandments are enabled to form righteous characters (Letter 44, 1903). {7BC 943.3}

The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house. The prodigal son in his wretchedness "came to himself." The deceptive power that Satan had exercised over him was broken. He saw that his suffering was the result of his own folly, and he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father." Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father's love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God's love that constrains the sinner to return to God. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to

repentance.” Romans 2:4. A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul. The Lord declares, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Jeremiah 31:3. {COL 202.1}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan’s charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. {SC 60.2}

In calling them to His service, God offers them freedom. Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. {TM 247.1}

Our sanctification is the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is the fulfillment of the covenant God has made with those who bind themselves up with Him, to stand with Him, His Son, and His Spirit in holy fellowship. {7BC 908.11}

We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith. “Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.” 1 John 3:5, 6. Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law. “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.” 1 John 3:7. Righteousness is defined by the standard of God’s holy law, as expressed in the ten precepts given on Sinai. {SC 61.1}

God knows that if we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan's ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore the law of God confines us to his will, which is high and noble and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. It is for our present and eternal good to work the works of God. If his will is cheerfully and gratefully accepted, the results will be seen in the service rendered and in the character developed. {ST, July 22, 1897 par. 10}

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897 par. 11}

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us. {DA 668.3}

As Christ lived the law in humanity, so we may do if we will take hold of the Strong for strength. But we are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised. Whatever was given to Christ—the “all things” to supply the need of fallen men—was given to Him as the head and representative of humanity. And “whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” 1 John 3:22. {DA 668.4}

Christ possessed the same nature that man possesses. He was tempted in all points like as man is tempted. The same power by which He obeyed is at man's command. {TMK 292.6}